

Wilbur,  
born the runt in a litter of pigs,  
is saved by eight-year-old Fern Arable.

And then, just when life on Zuckerman's farm seems too boring to bear,

Wilbur finds another friend.

Her name is Charlotte.

She hangs upside down, eats blood,

and writes his future in her web—

***Charlotte's Web.***



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***Charlotte's Web***  
By E. B. White  
***A Novel Teaching Pack***  
By Margaret Whisnant

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## Goals

To . . .

- Offer a teaching guide with a full spectrum of learning experiences that flow from **basic knowledge** to **higher-level thinking skills**.
- Provide **classroom-ready** materials that **motivate** and **instruct**.
- Create **novel-specific activities** that require careful reading, help develop comprehension skills, and challenge the thinking process.
- Accommodate a wide variety of student **ability** and **interest**.
- **Support teachers** by providing a practical teaching resource that saves preparation time.
- Include **cross-curricula activities** as an integral part of the novel study.
- Correlate to various state **education standards and requirements** for language arts.

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## The Seven Components. . .

### 1. Summaries

Written in present tense, the chapter-by-chapter summaries are more detailed than those found in most teachers' guides or other sources. Important points of the plot, character motivation and development, and story clues are all included. For quick reference, the summaries are presented in bulleted format. These synopses are a valuable resource for

*quickly becoming familiar with a title when time is limited  
managing a reading program that involves multiple titles/reading groups  
facilitating independent study  
refreshing memory when using a novel from year to year.*

### 2. Before You Read

In this component, the focus is on sparking student interest. Each teaching pack includes both an **independent activity** and a series of **whole-group/small-group discussion** or **research topics**, written as open-ended questions.

At least one **bulletin board idea** is included. In some cases, activities in the **Think, Write, Create** component also involve the creation of a bulletin board or classroom display.

### 3. Vocabulary

One of the many advantages of literature-based reading instruction is the opportunity to observe vocabulary in action! It is this circumstance that drives the vocabulary portion of the novel teaching packs.

#### **Word Choices. . .**

The words lifted from the novel for focused study are chosen based on one or more of the following criteria:

<i>their level of difficulty</i>	<i>their frequency of use in children's literature</i>
<i>their importance in comprehending the story</i>	<i>their value as useful composition vocabulary</i>
<i>the probability that they will be encountered across the curriculum</i>	<i>unique meanings, spellings, pronunciation, etc.</i>

#### **Word Lists and Definitions. . .**

For teacher convenience and reference, word lists with definitions are included. The selected words are arranged in story order, complete with page numbers so they can be spotted easily and studied in their "natural habitats." For clarity, the definitions are paraphrased to match the word's tense, number, part of speech, etc. rather than cross referenced as in a standard dictionary. The major resource of this information is [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com).

#### **Dictionary Activities. . .**

Long word lists are divided into chapter sets of workable numbers and presented as **Dictionary Digs**—sometimes given a slightly different name to correspond with the theme of the novel. In this introductory

stage, students use a dictionary to answer a series of multiple choice questions about word meanings, usage, unique characteristics, etc.

### **Using the Words. . .**

Other activities, which pull terms from the lists in random order, lead students through a variety of word studies which include

<i>sentence usage</i>	<i>word types (acronyms, onomatopoeia , etc.)</i>
<i>word forms</i>	<i>scrambled sentences</i>
<i>synonyms and antonyms</i>	<i>analogies</i>
<i>anagrams</i>	<i>whole-class/group games</i>
<i>categories</i>	<i>etymologies</i>
<i>word-groups/connections</i>	

Note: Some of these varieties, but not all, are found in each Teaching Pack.

## **4. Assessment**

The two sections in this portion of the teaching pack offer a wealth of materials designed to build a strong **foundation** for student progression to higher level thinking skills. The operative phrase is **basic comprehension**.

### **Short Answer Questions**

Short answer questions for each chapter (or groups of chapters) are the first available assessment tools. The items encourage (and check) careful reading. Some require the reader to recognize a major event or idea while others involve finding a minor detail. The questions are in *sequence* with the pages they cover, but they are **not** designed to call attention to plot construction or other story elements.

The short answer questions can be used as

<i>student reading guides</i>	<i>discussion group guides</i>
<i>pop quizzes</i>	<i>conferencing with individual students</i>

### **Objective Tests**

The objective tests have multiple functions. In addition to their obvious application, they also serve as tools that can *improve **comprehension skills** by providing practice in understanding plot structure and recognizing important story elements.*

#### **Rationale:**

#### **Focus on the Plot. . .**

Whether they are aware of their ability or not, all good readers sense the **rhythm** of the **connected** events that compose the plot of a novel, and consequently **comprehend** the story. They are in tune with cause and effect, behavior and consequence, sequence—the heartbeat of the narrative.

This “plot rhythm” forms the framework for the objective tests. The chain of events that tell the story have been pulled from the novel and reformatted into a series of sequential questions, none of which require **interpretation**. They are intended to **draw student attention to the fact that something happened**, not to what the incident means. That comes later.

In addition to their testing function, teachers may use the pages to strengthen their students’ ability to **Summarize**: With only the questions as a guide, have students write a summary of the chapter. For a set of ten questions, limit the number of sentences they may write to seven or fewer. When they work with twenty or more questions, allow no more than twelve sentences.

**Report the News**: Ask your students to write a newspaper article based on the events identified in a set of questions and the *who, what, when, where, why* elements. Some information needed to complete this assignment may be located in previous chapters.

**Twist the Plot**: Choose one or two questions from each chapter and change its answer—true to false, no to yes, etc.—to demonstrate how changing a single (or several) events would (or would not) change the story. This process can be used to help students become proficient in distinguishing major plot movers from minor story details.

#### **The Characters. . .**

Too often, when they are asked to describe a story character’s personality, the only answer many students can muster is “nice.” This portion of the Novel Teaching Pack, coupled with related activities from **Think, Write, Create**, is a well of opportunities for those teachers who wish to eradicate “nice” from their students’ vocabularies!

Questions that identify a character’s personality and/or motivation are purposely and carefully included with the plot movers. Again, the questions do not require **interpretation**. They simply establish that someone did or said something—knowledge that is invaluable when character analysis is required.

### **Implied Meaning and Story Clues. . .**

The objective tests include items that establish the existence of story components carrying **implied meaning**. **Story clues** that tantalize the reader with hints of future events also appear as question. At this point in the novel study, as before, **interpretation** is not the goal. **Awareness** of the **facts** is the target.

### **Developing/Improving Listening Skills. . .**

Listening skills are rightfully included on every list of state competency requirements. Rather than always requiring students to answer test questions on a printed page, why not surprise them occasionally by doing the test orally and meeting competency goals at the same time?

### **Discussion Guide Capability. . .**

The objective tests are helpful discussion guides. Use individual items on these pages to draw student attention to sequence, cause and effect, story clues (foreshadowing), character traits, recognizing and interpreting implied meanings, etc. These “thinking out loud” sessions are an **important building block** for the next learning phase.

## **5. Think, Write, Create**

In this section, students pack up what they already know about the novel and go exploring into its every nook and cranny. Some activities require the simplest interpretation or application, while others will challenge the most proficient thinkers. There is a high probability that young scholars, even reluctant ones, will label some of the selections as **fun**.

### **Rationale:**

#### **Guidelines. . .**

Most of the items in this section are based on the skills presented in the **Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom’s Taxonomy)**. There are two reasons for this choice. First, it mirrors the Novel Teaching Pack’s primary purpose of building a variety of sophisticated thinking skills on a foundation of basic knowledge. Second, in following the taxonomy guidelines, activities that correlate with many state educational standards emerge automatically.

#### **Organization. . .**

**Chapter-specific** activities are grouped and presented according to their corresponding sets of **Short Answer Questions** and **Objective Test** page(s). Having led students through the basics for each chapter (or selected section), teachers may shop in this section for in-depth activities to optimize student understanding and interest. Armed with a firm grasp of each successive chapter, students are more likely to anticipate, embrace, and enjoy the next section. By repeating the process, students are also mastering concepts and intricacies connected to the **whole** novel

The **Whole Book Activities**, as their name indicates, require a grasp of the theme(s), characters, implications, etc. as they apply to the full novel. These pages are a teacher’s smorgasbord of culminating possibilities. In some cases, the choices are outgrowths of concepts that students have dealt with in a previous activity. In others, students are encouraged to look at the novel from a new angle.

#### **Levels of Difficulty. . .**

A broad spectrum of **difficulty levels** to accommodate the needs of individual students, including the gifted, is an integral part of **Think, Write, Create**. However, **all** items from this section are intended to **challenge** and **sharpen** thinking abilities.

#### **Activities. . .**

**Every** novel teaching pack includes activities that require students to choose and use precise, appropriate, and meaningful **vocabulary**. These exercises involve choosing a group of words to describe a character’s personality or behavior. The following example is from **Charlotte’s Web**.

Eight-year-old Fern cried and begged her father not to destroy the runt pig. She sealed the little animal’s fate by asking her father if he would have killed her if she had been born very small.

- Which **two** of the following words do you think **best** describe the way Fern’s father behaved during this episode? Explain your choice. Include the definitions of the words you selected in your answer.

<i>practical</i>	<i>sensitive</i>	<i>loving</i>	<i>cruel</i>	<i>considerate</i>
<i>realistic</i>	<i>flexible</i>	<i>callous</i>	<i>compassionate</i>	<i>logical</i>

- Choose **two** words from the list below that you believe **best** describe Fern’s behavior. Explain why they are the appropriate words. Use the definitions of your choices as part of your explanation.

<i>impulsive</i>	<i>compassionate</i>	<i>assertive</i>	<i>tender-hearted</i>	<i>hysterical</i>
<i>undisciplined</i>	<i>naive</i>	<i>juvenile</i>	<i>humane</i>	<i>empathetic</i>

In each case students work with a given collection of terms, all of which can be correctly applied to the character(s) in question. However, the individual words have strengths of meaning. It is the student's task to analyze both the character's behavior and the words, make choices, and then cite events from the story to support his/her selection.

Teachers may opt to narrow the choices to fewer words, choose words for individual students, divide the class into groups and offer a specific set of words to each group, or use the assignment as it is written. Whatever the technique, it is here that the word **nice** can be knocked off the shelf, shattered on the floor, and swept out the door. No longer necessary. Useless. Gone!

**Other items** in this section challenge students to . . .  
*write for self-expression, for communication, and for entertainment*  
*form opinions and theories*  
*cite "evidence" from the story to support their explanations and opinions*  
*connect personal experience to story situations*  
*become familiar with and identify literary elements*  
*analyze story characters and events*  
*make predictions based on given facts*

*think about social issues*  
*create drawings, diagrams, photos, maps, models, recordings, films, etc.*  
*imagine*  
*categorize*  
*engage in research and data gathering*  
*recognize and perceive story theme(s)*  
*understand point of view*

### **Cross Curricula. . .**

**Think, Write, Create** takes full advantage of opportunities to connect both major themes and the smallest story detail to other realms of the curriculum. In **Charlotte's Web**, for example, students may apply their calculation skills to a page of "Spider Math." In the **Holes** teaching pack is a challenge to create a game that utilizes a "saved" group of Camp Green Lake's holes.

### **Options, options, and more options. . .**

**Think, Write, Create** is purposely bulging at the seams to give teachers **pick-and-choose options** for  
*individualizing assignments*  
*group work*  
*whole class activities*  
*capitalizing on student interest*  
*homework*  
*short-term and long-term projects*  
*differentiating assignments*

## **6. Graphic Organizers**

Ideas for the graphic organizers are pulled from the chapter or whole book activities and expanded into a writing assignment. Priority is given to those topics that allow a student to relate personal experiences, make choices, empathize with a story character, and/or imagine.

### **Structure. . .**

The organizers do not repeat a set pattern of circles, squares, lines, etc., prescribed for a particular type of writing. Each one is tailored to a **specific idea** pulled from the novel. **Structured directions** for organizing the topic support the student at this stage of the process so that **writing** is the major focus.

### **Non-writing Organizers. . .**

Sometimes, students are enticed to stretch their imaginations by filling out "forms" or writing "diary entries." One graphic organizer from **Hatchet**, for example, allows students to assume the persona of the pilot who rescued Brian by writing three entries into his log—the day before the rescue, the day of the rescue, and the day after the rescue. In the **Holes** Novel Teaching Pack, students become detectives and conduct a "background check" on Mr. Sir, recording their findings on the provided "official form." In these cases, composition skills take a back seat to **imagination, empathy, and pure enjoyment**. Teachers may wish to capitalize on student enthusiasm by asking for a written "report" based on the information entered on the forms.

## **7. Answer Keys**

Keys for **all items that require a specific answer** are included in this section.

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### **A final note from the author. . .**

It is my personal wish that when the last page has been read, the last activity completed, and the last idea discussed, at least one of your students will ask, "What are we going to read next?"

  
Margaret Whisnant

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## Chapter Summaries

### Chapter I Before Breakfast

- One morning before breakfast, eight-year-old Fern Arable is upset that Papa has gone to the hoghouse with an ax to get rid of a runt pig born the night before.
- Fern rushes from the house into the outdoor springtime and begs her father not to kill the pig.
- Mr. Arable tells Fern she must learn to control herself. He says a weakling makes trouble.
- Fern asks her father if he would have killed her if she had been very small at birth. She characterized what her father is planning to do as a *terrible case of injustice*.
- Mr. Arable sends Fern back to the house with a promise that he will bring the runt in to her.
- Inside the carton that Fern's father puts on her chair is the newborn white pig. Fern says he's absolutely perfect. She is holding the pig when her brother Avery enters the room.
- Ten-year-old Avery criticizes Fern's pig for being no bigger than a white rat, but he asks if he can have one, too. Mr. Arable says he only gives pigs to early risers.
- Fern cannot eat until her pig has a drink of milk. She sits on the floor in the kitchen and feeds her infant.
- The school bus arrives. Mrs. Arable takes the pig and gives Fern a doughnut. By the time the bus reaches school, Fern has named her pet Wilbur.

### Chapter II Wilbur

- Fern loves Wilbur more than anything. She feeds him every morning and several times more after she gets home from school. Wilbur watches Fern with adoring eyes when she warms his bottles.
- Wilbur is soon moved from his box near the stove in the kitchen to a bigger box in the woodshed. When he is two weeks old, Wilbur goes outdoors to live in a large wooden box full of straw under an apple tree. He burrows and disappears under the straw where he is comfortable and warm.
- Each morning Wilbur walks with Fern to wait for the school bus and stays to watch it vanish around the turn. He waits inside his yard until Fern comes home. He follows her everywhere.
- Fern puts Wilbur in the carriage beside her doll when he grows tired during their walks. She wheels the carriage very slowly so as not to wake her infants.
- One warm afternoon, when Fern and Avery go swimming in the brook, Wilbur amuses himself in the mud along the edge of the brook. The pig's days are happy and his nights are peaceful.
- Wilbur is a spring pig. When he is five weeks old, Mr. Arable says he must be sold like his ten brothers and sisters. Despite Fern's tears, Mr. Arable does not give in. Mrs. Arable suggests that Fern call her Uncle Homer Zuckerman who sometimes raises pigs. On the Zuckerman farm, Wilbur will be close enough for Fern to visit often.
- Mr. Arable suggests that Fern sell her pig for six dollars. The next day, Wilbur is taken from his home under the apple tree and goes to live in a manure pile in the cellar of Zuckerman's barn.

### Chapter III Escape

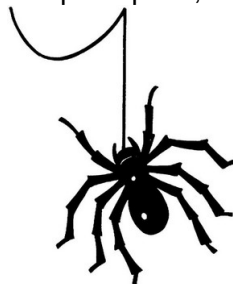
- Homer Zuckerman's barn is very large and very old, but Wilbur's manure pile in the cellar is warm and comfortable.
- Fern visits her Uncle Homer's farm almost every afternoon to sit on a milking stool as she thinks and listens and watches Wilbur. She is not allowed to take the pig out or go into his pen. The animals get to know and trust her because she is so quiet and friendly.
- Wilbur is happy to have Fern sitting outside his pen, but he never has any fun. One afternoon in June, when he is almost two months old, Wilbur believes that he's tired of living. There was no place to go but indoors or out into his small pen.
- The goose tells Wilbur that there is a loose board in the fence. Wilbur pushes it open with his head and squeezes through. On the advice of the goose, he goes to the orchard.
- Wilbur has rooted up quite a piece of ground before Mrs. Zuckerman sees him from the kitchen window and shouts for Mr. Zuckerman and Lurvy, the hired man.

## Word Lists with Definitions

(Arranged in story order. Some words may appear on more than one page.)

### Set One: Chapter 1 Before Breakfast—Chapter V Charlotte

- sopping** Being thoroughly soaked; dripping or soaked in liquid; dripping; soggy. (p. 1)
- injustice** Violation of another's rights or of what is fair: something that is wrong; violation; a crime; wrongdoing. (p. 3)
- specimen** An example regarded as typical of a class such as an animal, plant, mineral, etc.; an example; a sampling; representation. (p. 5)
- distribute** To divide and give out in shares; to pass out and deliver (as newspapers) to intended recipients; hand out; dispense. (p. 5)
- blissful** Full of, abounding in, enjoying extreme happiness; joyful; euphoric. (p. 7)
- adoring** Regarding with love, esteem, and respect; honoring; admiring; loving. (p. 8)
- enchanted** Attracted and delighted; entranced; charmed. (p. 9)
- discarded** Thrown away; no longer in use; rejected; cast aside. (p. 15)
- trough** A long, narrow, open receptacle, usually boxlike in shape, used chiefly to hold water or food for animals; a long depression or hollow, as between two ridges or waves. (p. 16)
- hullabaloo** Great noise or excitement; a noisy disturbance; an uproar; disorder; excitement; agitation; clamor. (p. 22)
- lure** To attract, entice, or tempt; a decoy; live or artificial bait used in fishing or trapping; bribe; tempt. (p. 22)
- eaves** The overhanging, lower edge of a roof. (p. 25)
- morsel** A bite, mouthful, or small portion of food, candy, etc.; scrap; bit. (p. 26)
- frolic** To play in a light-spirited manner; romp; to have fun. (p. 29)
- glutton** A person who eats and drinks in excessive amounts; a person with a remarkably great desire or capacity for something; overeater. (p. 29)
- stealthily** Done or acting quietly, cautiously, or secretly for the purpose of avoiding notice; furtively; secretly; surreptitiously. (p. 30)
- cunning** Skill employed in a shrewd or sly manner, as in deceiving; craftiness; ingenuity; intelligence. *Informal:* charmingly cute or appealing. (p. 30)
- dejected** Depressed in spirits; unhappy; disheartened; discouraged; despondent. (p. 30)
- endure** To carry on in spite of hardship; to continue without yielding; stand; suffer; bear. (p. 31)
- appropriate** *Adjective:* Suitable or fitting for a particular purpose, person, or occasion; *Verb:* to set apart, authorize, or legislate for some specific purpose or use; to take without permission or consent. (p. 34)
- meekly** Done without spirit or resistance; accomplished with patience and humility; humbly; submissively; docilely. (p. 35)
- salutations** A polite expression of greeting or goodwill, indicating respect or affection; hello. (p. 35)
- blundered** Moved clumsily or blindly; made an unusually serious mistake. (p. 37)
- detested** Disliked intensely; abhorred; despised. (p. 38)
- wits** Powers of intelligent observation, keen perception, and mental ability. (p. 40)

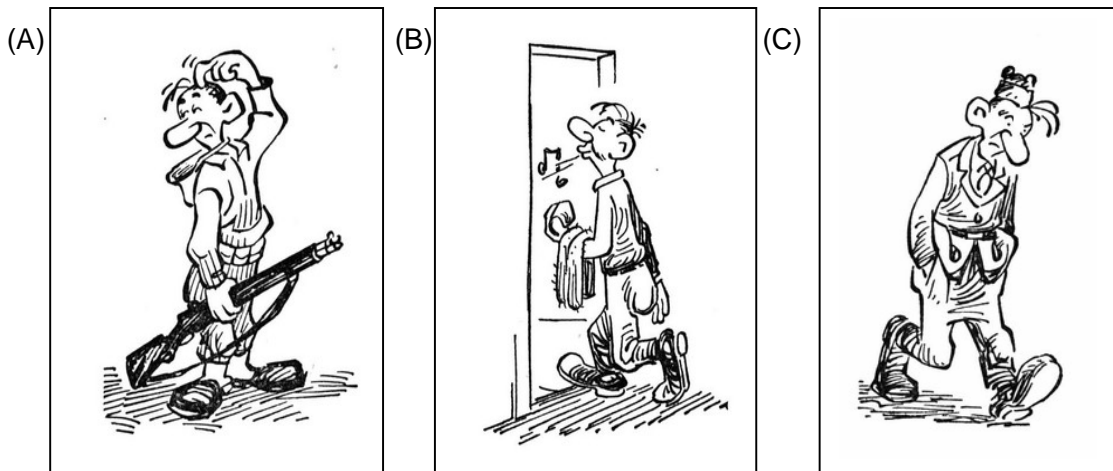


# Dictionary Digs

Set One: Chapter 1 Before Breakfast—Chapter V Charlotte

Dig into your favorite dictionary to find answers to all the following questions about some challenging words from the first five chapters of *Charlotte's Web*. Write the **letters** of the correct answers in the blanks to the left.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Which of the following is the best example of a **morsel**? (A) a piece of a broken chocolate chip cookie, (B) a tract of land less than one acre, (C) a cheese sandwich.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. A **glutton** is a person who (A) follows a strict vegetarian diet, (B) likes only one type of food and is a picky eater as well, (C) eats and drinks in excessive amounts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. A **synonym** for the word **meekly** is (A) casually, (B) boisterously, (C) docilely.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. A good example of a fine **specimen** is (A) the tallest member of a basketball team, (B) a dog awarded the title of Best in Show, (C) any new technological discovery.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Which of the following phrases illustrates the **best** use of the word **enchanted**? (A) an **enchanted** solution to the problem, (B) fully **enchanted** with the most modern equipment, (C) **enchanted** by the baby's smile.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Which of the following words is closely associated with the term **sopping**? (A) mopping, (B) soaked, (C) sentimental
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The word that is an **antonym** of **detested** is (A) adored (B) abhorred, (C) ejected.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Which of the following cartoons **best** illustrates the meaning of the word **dejected**?



- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Under what circumstances is a person **most likely** to use a **lure**? When he or she (A) is shopping for a bargain, (B) is fishing, (C) wants to remain anonymous.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. A word that does not rhyme with **trough** is (A) cough, (B) scoff, (C) rough.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Which word can be substituted for **cunning** in the following sentence without changing its meaning?  
*With skillful use of words and **cunning**, Mr. Hensley drew others into his scheme.*  
(A) shrewdness, (B) charisma, (C) ineptness
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Something that would probably **not** be part of a **hullabaloo** is (A) noise or excitement, (B) celebrations and festivities, (C) tranquility and quiet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. A **synonym** for **blissful** is (A) euphoric, (B) dejected, (C) reproachful.

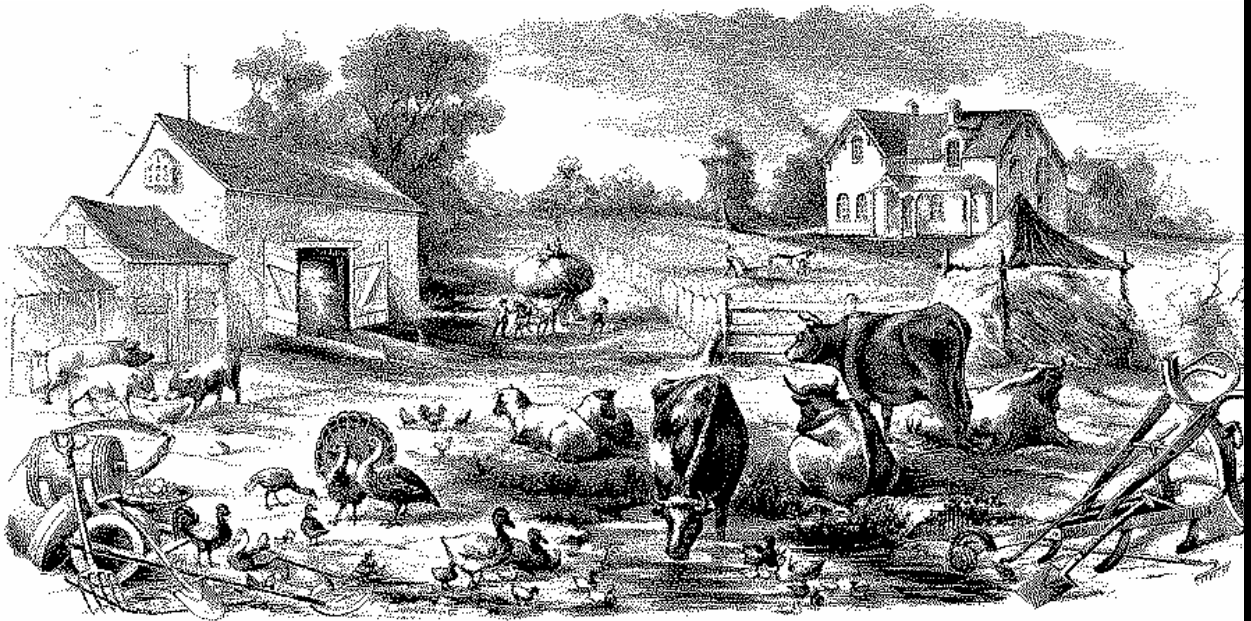
## Short Answer Questions

### **Chapter I Before Breakfast**

1. How did Fern find out that her father was going to kill the runt pig?
2. How old was Fern?
3. What example did Fern give her father to prove that killing the little pig was unfair?
4. How did Fern describe her father's intention to kill the runt?
5. Where did Fern find the pig when she came downstairs from changing her sneakers?
6. What color was the pig?
7. How did Mr. Arable answer when Fern's brother asked if he could have a pig?
8. What was Fern doing when the school bus honked from the road?
9. How did Fern feel about having entire charge of a pig?
10. Why did Fern answer the teacher's question about the capital of Pennsylvania with "Wilbur"?

### **Chapter II Wilbur**

1. How did Fern feel about Wilbur?
2. Who fed Wilbur while Fern was at school?
3. After he was moved from his place in the house to the box in the woodshed, where did Wilbur live next?
4. How did Fern know that Wilbur would stay warm in his outdoor home?
5. What did Wilbur do every morning after breakfast?
6. How did Fern help when Wilbur got tired during their walks with the doll carriage?
7. How old was Wilbur when Mr. Arable said he had to be sold like his ten brothers and sisters?
8. Why did Mrs. Arable suggest that Fern call her Uncle Homer Zuckerman?
9. How much did Mr. Zuckerman pay for Wilbur?
10. Where was Wilbur's new home?



Chapter I: *Before Breakfast*  
Pages 1-7

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Mr. Arable planned to kill the small new-born pig because it was sick.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Mr. Arable was going to destroy the pig with an ax.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Fern asked her father if he would have killed her if she had been born very small.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Fern thought killing the pig was unfair and a terrible injustice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Mr. Arable brought the pig into the house so Fern could bottle feed it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. When she saw the pig in the carton, Fern said he was absolutely too small for her to take care of.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Avery was Fern's younger brother.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Mr. Arable said Fern got the pig because she was an early riser.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Fern had trouble getting the pig to drink from the baby bottle.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Fern named the pig Wilbur.

# Think, Write, Create

## Chapter Activities

### Chapter I Before Breakfast

Eight-year-old Fern cried and begged her father not to destroy the runt pig. She sealed the little animal's fate by asking her father if he would have killed her if she had been born very small.

- Which **two** of the following words do you think **best** describe the way Fern's father behaved during this episode? Explain your choice. Include the definitions of the words you selected in your answer..

*practical*

*sensitive*

*cruel*

*loving*

*considerate*

*realistic*

*flexible*

*callous*

*compassionate*

*logical*

- Choose **two** words from the list below that you believe **best** describe Fern's behavior. Explain why they are the appropriate words. Use the words' definitions as part of your explanation.

*impulsive*

*compassionate*

*assertive*

*tender-hearted*

*hysterical*

*undisciplined*

*naive*

*juvenile*

*humane*

*empathetic*

When Avery asked if he could have a pig, Mr. Arable told his son he only distributed pigs to early risers. Mr. Arable's words were very much like the adage "*The early bird gets the worm.*"

What do you think this old saying means both *literally* (as it applies to actual birds and worms) and *figuratively* (as it applies to people getting what they want)? A maxim that seems to contradict the *early bird* advice is "*Better late than never.*" How do you interpret this idea?

Which bit of wisdom do you believe people should follow? Are both of them valuable? Which one do you think **best** describes the way you do things?

Think carefully, and then write a composition about ***The Early Bird Gets the Worm, But Better Late Than Never.*** (See **Graphic Organizer #1**)

The objects Avery took with him when he ran to catch the bus and his attitude toward the pig are clues to his personality.

- What were the objects that Avery carried? What do they tell you about his interests?
- How was Avery's attitude toward the runt pig different from Fern's? Which child was more interested in animals and their care? How can you prove that your answer is correct?
- Do you think Avery is a bad person? Why or why not?

The collection of toys Avery carried with him to school indicate that Charlotte's story was written quite a while ago.

- Prove it to yourself by thinking about what would happen to Avery if he came to your class adorned as described in the story?
  - Do you remember a time in your school career when such a thing would have been allowed?
  - What year was ***Charlotte's Web*** written? How old is the story?
-

## Think, Write, Create

### Whole Book Activities

It was the old sheep who gave Wilbur the bad news about what was planned for him at Christmastime. Though the information upset the young pig terribly, the old sheep's warning began the chain of events that changed Wilbur's fate.

What are some real-life warnings—a storm alert, a stop light, for example—that might sometimes seem *inconvenient* or *frightening*? Think of your home, riding in a car, your vulnerability as a pedestrian, your day at school, and repeated advice from adults to generate ideas. Choose the **four** warnings that you believe are the most important for **your own safety**. Write a composition about **Beneficial Warnings**. (See **Graphic Organizer # 8**)

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As Wilbur and Charlotte's co-tenants on Zuckerman's farm, the goose and the gander mixed their unique personalities into the day-to-day drama. Take a look at the following list of behavior characteristics and select **three** that you think **best** apply to the goose. Then pick **three** for the gander. You may use the same word(s) for both animals. Find events in the story to explain and support **each word** you chose. Organize the required data and then write a composition about **The Goose and the Gander**. (See **Graphic Organizer #9**)

*scatterbrained*  
*dedicated*  
*intelligent*  
*empty-headed*

*talkative*  
*entertaining*  
*humorous*  
*braggart*

*friendly*  
*nurturing*  
*devoted*  
*irresponsible*

*supportive*  
*helpful*  
*protective*  
*playful*

---

The author wrote of Templeton. . . *The rat had no morals, no conscience, no scruples, no consideration, no decency, no milk of rodent kindness, no compunctions, no higher feeling, no friendliness, no anything.*

- Give **four** examples from the story that illustrate how Templeton's nasty personality was beneficial to Wilbur and Charlotte. Do you think they were wrong to take advantage of the rat's greedy nature? Why or why not?
  - What evidence can you find to prove that Templeton wasn't all bad?
  - Can you name any living thing on earth that has absolutely no worth? Explain how you arrived at the answer to this question.
- 

Avery Arable was rambunctious, impulsive, and a bit of a clown. Unlike his sister Fern, he had no concept of the plots brewing on his Uncle Homer's farm. Nevertheless, he managed to blunder into the action.

Imagine that Avery kept a journal. Write his entries for *the day Fern got Wilbur*, *the day he tried to capture Charlotte*, and *the day Wilbur won the special prize at the Fair*. (See **Graphic Organizer #10**)

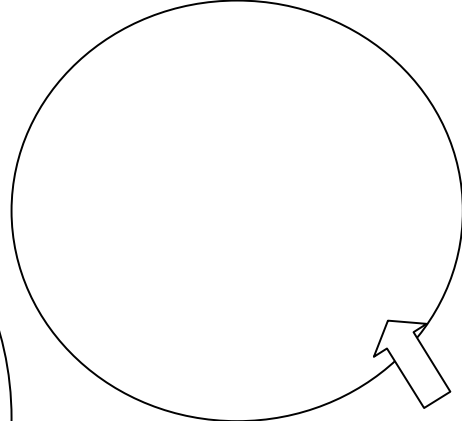
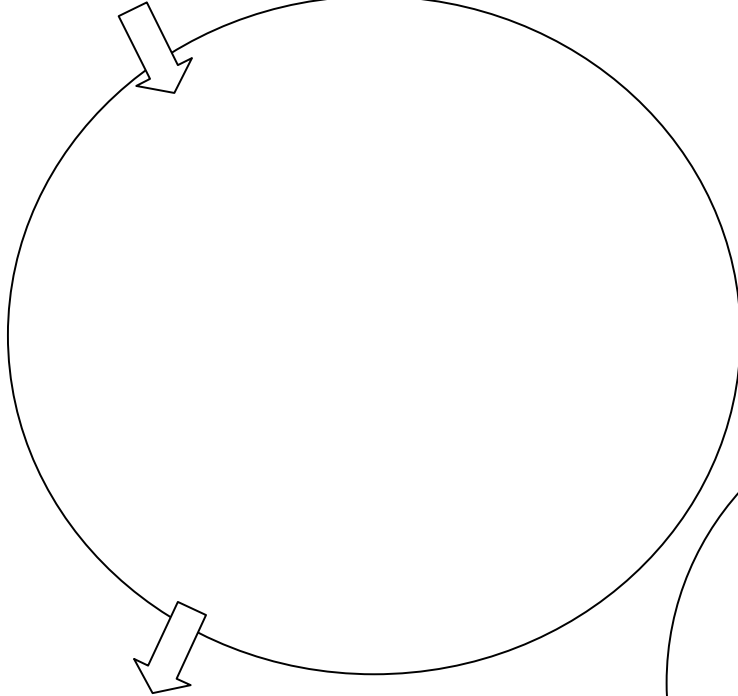
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# Templeton Goes Feasting and Carousing

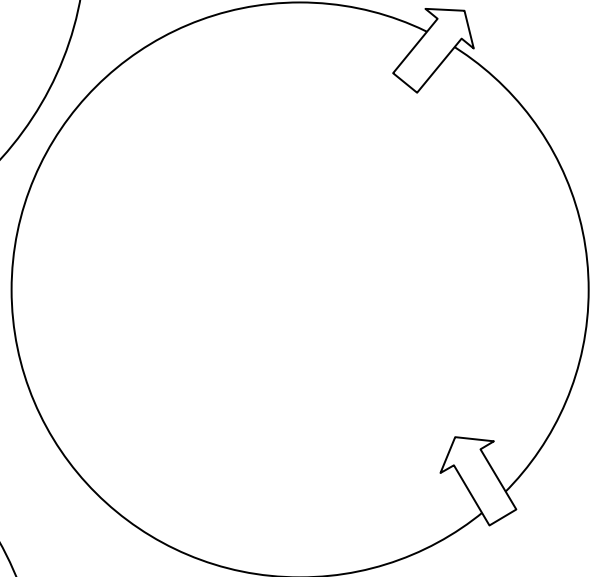
When he returned from his night at the Fair, Templeton was *swollen to twice his normal size*. His stomach was as big around as a jelly jar. Though he didn't give a detailed account of his experience, the rat said to Charlotte and Wilbur, "What a night! . . . Oh, it was rich, my friends, rich!"

Imagine that you followed Templeton and took notes on the form below. Write the full story of how **Templeton Goes Feasting and Carousing**.

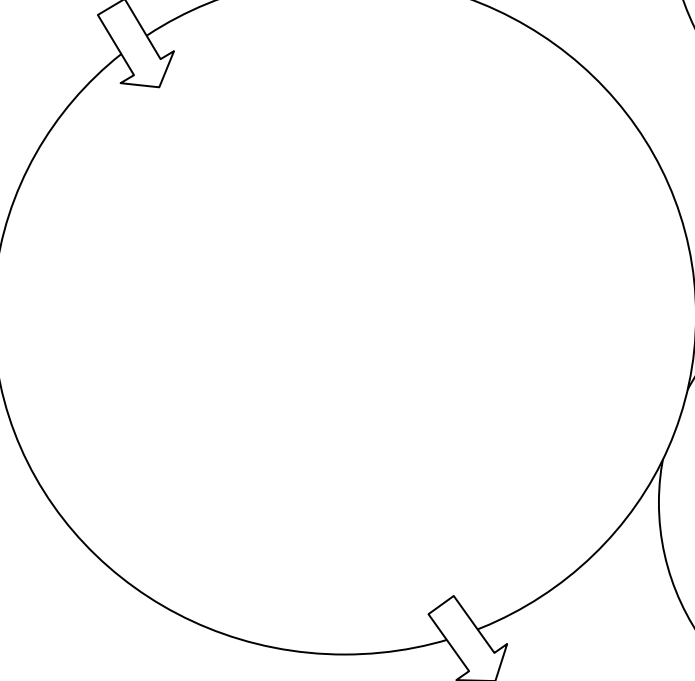
A description of some of the food and drink that Templeton found—its condition, aroma, location, etc. . .



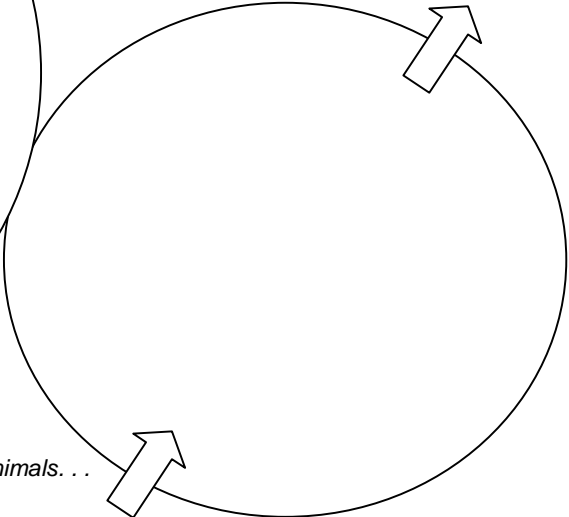
Templeton calls it a night. . . .



Templeton's table manners and personal hygiene. . .



Close call. . . Templeton almost gets caught. . .



Templeton meets a few other animals. . .  
(cute girl rat? . . .)